BRITISH COLUMBIA

NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests and Range

COLEMAN ASKS BRITISH COLUMBIANS TO STAY FIRE SAFE

VICTORIA – With fire danger ratings forecast to remain high across much of the province over the weekend, Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman is encouraging everyone to be vigilant against fire while outdoors.

"When a wildfire starts, it's not just trees that are threatened," said Coleman. "Since fires caused by people are often close to communities, they put homes, properties, and the safety of our firefighters at risk."

Last year, 23 fires were caused by people over the B.C. Day long weekend. So far this year, about 40 per cent of all wildfires have been caused by people.

"We've got about 360 wildfires burning in B.C. right now," said the Minister. "I'm asking all British Columbians to be careful with fire this weekend so we can minimize the risk of preventable, people-caused fires."

About 1,750 firefighters are currently deployed on firelines across British Columbia.

Some campfire bans are in place in provincial parks and local government areas; please check with local authorities for further information. While the B.C. Forest Service has no campfire bans in effect for the long weekend, it will be increasing patrols and enforcement in recreational areas to make sure campfires are kept small and are being monitored at all times. Violation tickets will be issued as required.

Coleman said campers should douse their fires with water so that the ashes are cool to the touch, and smokers should not dispose of cigarettes carelessly near forests or grasslands.

Please report all grass and forest fires, along with any suspicious fire activity, to 1-800-663-5555, or *5555 on the cellular network.

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